Cooking with bunyaad

Weaving stories of hand knotted rugs,
Pakistani artisans & fair trade into our cooking.

Shawarma
with Cucumber Raita & Pickled Turnips

We are "traveling" to Pakistan
with Bunyaad director & creative culinary guy
Yousaf Chaman.

Born in Lahore, Pakistan, Yousaf will lead us
in marinating chicken in one of two different
shawarma spice mixtures & making alu tikis as a
vegetarian option. Grill it up outside or cook inside
depending on the weather.

Served with naan bread and a simple salad,
shawarma makes the perfect simple summer dinner.

Simple Summer Shawarma

In Pointe-Claire Village on the west shore of Montreal and near where we've done rug events for roughly 25 years is Epicerie Prette, a gourmet beer shop & corner store run by our friend Al. It's next to our favorite fair trade coffee shop Victor Rose and down the street from the long-time location of the fair trade store Dix Mille Villages. Al's shawarmas are simply made but are the closest to our favorites found throughout Pakistan. We make them at home for simple summer dinners. Grill the meat outside on your grill or cook on your stovetop if you aren't grill inclined. For a vegetarian version, make these simple Alu Tikis. Heat up a store-bought pita or naan, drizzle cucumber mint raita, top with shawarma meator Alu Tikis and top with goodies that suit your fancy: spinach or lettuce, tomatoes, sliced onions, pickled turnips, black olives, fresh parsley, fresh cilantro, etc. Or serve over vermicelli rice.

Shawarma Yogurt Marinade

1/2 teaspoon ginger
6 cardamom pods, crushed open
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon silk chili
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon dried mint
1 cup yogurt
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs

Shawarma Oil Marinade

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
10 cardamom pods, crushed open
1 tablespoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon silk chili
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
1 teaspoon salt
5 shakes of black pepper
1 teaspoon black lime
3 tablespoons oil
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs

Choose which marinade you want to use. Mix marinade ingredients together and massage into meat. In an ideal world, let marinate overnight but on a hurried summer evening, marinating for just 30 minutes can work. Grill until meat is just done (don't over grill it or it will become dry!) Slice meat into thin slices and assemble shawarma on warm naan or pita. Drizzle cucumber mint raita, top with shawarma meat/vegetables and top with goodies that suit your fancy: spinach or lettuce, tomatoes, sliced onions, pickled turnips, black olives, fresh parsley, fresh cilantro, etc. Or serve over vermicelli rice.

Alu Tiki (Vegetarian Option for Shawarma Filling)

This classic Pakistani potato patty is much like a falafel and, when shallow fried, makes a perfect vegetarian filling for shawarma.

Makes 10 alu tiki
3 large potatoes, peeled, cubed and boiled
1 medium onion, chopped very fine
2 green chilis, chopped fine
1/3 cup chopped cilantro
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sweet paprika or smoked paprika powder

Boil cubed and peeled potatoes until soft. Drain completely and mash with a potato masher until very fine. Add onions, green chilis, cilantro, salt & paprika and mix completely. Form into small patties. Every Pakistani family has their own favorite way to pan-fry (shallow fry) alu tiki. Some dip in egg to add a little more protein. Some dip in a thin mix of water and cornstarch for a more crispy patty while others dredge in breadcrumbs and fry. Assemble vegetarian shawarma on a warm naan or pita. Drizzle cucumber mint raita, top alu tiki and top with goodies that suit your fancy: spinach or lettuce, tomatoes, sliced onions, pickled turnips, black olives, fresh parsley, fresh cilantro, etc.

Cucumber Mint Raita Makes approximately 1 1/2 cup

1/4 cup Euphrates dried mint or 3/4 cup fresh mint leaves
2-3 springs fresh cilantro
1/2 teaspoon wild cumin
1/4-1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cup yogurt (we prefer a thicker greek yogurt for shawarma)
1/2 green chili, chopped and deseeded (optional)
1-2 tablespoons chopped cucumber (optional)
1-2 tablespoons onion, chopped (optional)

Quickly dry roast cumin in a fry pan on low. Add cumin to a blender or Vitamix and blend to a powder. Add yogurt, mint, cilantro, sugar, salt and chili to the blender. Blend well. Add chopped cucumbers or onions if desired. Drizzle raita either on hot naan first and then top with shawarma goodies or use it as a topper.

Pickled Turnips

3 cups water
1/3 cup kosher salt
2 bay leaves
1 cup white vinegar
2 pounds turnips, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch thick strips
1 small beet, cut into 1/2 inch thick batons
2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped

In a medium sized pot, add the water, kosher salt and bay leaves. Heat on medium heat, stirring until salt is completely dissolved (roughly about 3-5 minutes). Let cool completely then add the vinegar. In a large container with a tight fitting lid, add your turnips and beets. Add the garlic (this can be a very rough chop, you don't eat the garlic, it is only for seasoning so it doesn't need to look pretty). Pour the liquid into the container. Let sit for 5 days. Keep in the refrigerator and serve cold.

Vermicelli Rice with Pine Nuts

2 cups long grain or medium grain rice
1 cup broken vermicelli pasta
2 ½ tablespoon oil (olive oil will give you a great flavor if you have it)
salt to taste
½ cup toasted pine nuts, optional

Rinse rice completely and soak for 15-20 minutes. Drain well. In a medium pan, heat the oil on medium high. Add broken vermicelli and stir to toast it evenly. The vermicelli should turn a lovely golden brown but make certain not to overbroqn or burn it! Add the rice and continue to stir rice in the oil until well coated. Sprinkle with salt. Add approximately 3-4 cups of water and bring mixture to full boil. As water cooks off, turn to low and cover. Cook for roughly 15-20 minutes on low and then turn off, keeping covered, and allow remaining water to be absorbed (roughly 10-15 minutes). Transfer to a plate and top with toasted pine nuts if desired. Excellent to use as a base for shawarma meat and veggies.

Grab Your Shawarma Bundle

To make this Cooking with Bunyaad even more fun, purchase our Cooking with Bunyaad Shawarma for $45. The bundle includes: two fair trade spices–Black Lime from Guatemala & Smoked Pimenton Paprika from Spain, hand crocheted fair trade frisbee from Guatemala (because this dinner is so easy you can spend time enjoying the outdoors), cat bike chain bottle opener for those cool summer drinks and a hand carved mini wooden spice spoon

It's the perfect experience to gift friends and family (and of course, to gift one to yourself too!)

Purchase bundle https://marketplace.bunyaad.com

Grab quality fair trade coffee, mini mug rugs, hand painted mugs, Burlap & Barrel spices, gifts & more online at the Bunyaad Marketplace https://marketplace.bunyaad.com

Learn more about Bunyaad, our fair trade rug collection and our many special events at www.bunyaad.com